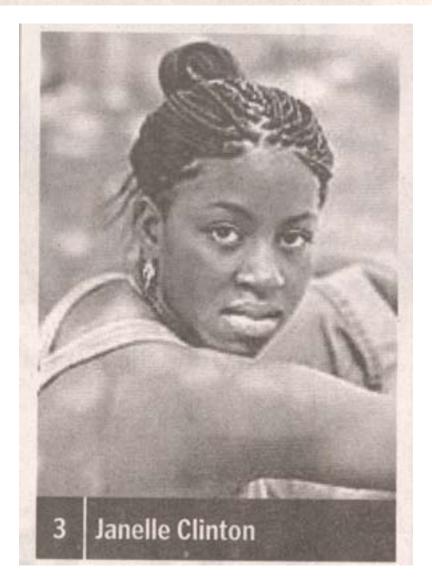
## Living Arts

THE BOSTON GLOBE TUESDAY, APRIL 25, 2006



## Local teens are finalists in rap contest

Seventeen-year-old Janelle Clinton entered the contest almost as a lark. "It wasn't so much about prizes as having my music critiqued," said the wannabe rapper from Mattapan. "I didn't know it was going to blow up like this." The senior at Fontbonne Academy is a finalist in Essence magazine's search for hip-hop's next big stars. (The contest is cosponsored by Berklee College of Music.) Clinton, whose stage name is "Lyric Jones," compares herself to the likes of MC

Lyte and Queen Latifah. "It's a new thing for me," she said. "Something I have a passion for." Tunes by the top 10, which includes Nyles "Lil Witness" Houston, 15, from Brockton, are available at Essence.com/takebackthemusic. The winners (two will take the grand prize) will be posted next month.

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